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SUBJECT: CODEL Voinovich Discusses the Way Forward in Gaza with Minister Dicter on Jan 2

¶1. Summary: On January 2, 2008 Codel Voinovich met with Israeli Minister of Internal Security, Avraham QAvi Dicter, at the Knesset in Jerusalem. Senator Voinovich was accompanied by Representatives Rob Bishop (R, Utah); Phil Gingrey (R, Georgia); Steve Pearce (R, New Mexico) and Michael Turner (R, Ohio) as well as by the Charge and emboff note taker. The 45 minute meeting centered on EgyptQs security patrol of the Gaza Strip border, the recent Army Corps of EngineerQs Report on smuggling routes into Gaza, and the lack of Israeli efforts to support the government of Abu Mazen (Mahmoud Abbas) and the Palestinian Authority. The Senator ended the meeting by requesting that Minister Dicter review the Army Corps of EngineerQs Report. Minister DicterQs response regarding the report was equivocal. End Summary

¶2. Minister Dicter began the meeting by relaying his fear that the current state of events would lead to Qthree states for two people.Q Dicter was referring to the fact that GazaQs Hamas leadership has been plotting a course divergent from that of the West Bank. He mentioned his concern that the Palestinian AuthorityQs government apparatus or QarchiveQ had been turned over to Hamas and criticized Mahmoud Abbas for not paying enough attention to combating terrorism networks functioning under his authority. He told Senator Voinovich that the PAQs inability to maintain security requires that Israel act instead and he cited the recent death of two Israeli soldiers in Hebron as an example of IsraelQs cost of doing so.

¶3. The Senator asked Dicter what Israel was doing to assist the PA. Dicter stated that without any real law enforcement efforts under its administration, aid to the PA was meaningless. The Senator countered by saying that there would be no security without a two-state solution, proper enforcement of the border between Egypt and Gaza, and proper enforcement of UN Resolution 1701. He challenged Dicter to review the recent US Army Corps of Engineers Report on issues concerning the border between Gaza and Egypt and asked Dicter why Israel was not doing its part to enforce UN Resolution 1701.

¶4. Dicter harshly criticized the Egyptians for failing to stem the rampant smuggling of goods and weaponry into the Gaza strip from Egyptian territory. He contended that the Egyptians simply lacked the QwillQ to act in the matter, stating that any real effort needed to Qstart with a decisionQ. The minister said that as little as 750 Egyptian soldiers would be able to control the smuggling along the Philadelphi Corridor. The Senator cited the Army Corps of EngineersQ report as disagreeing with DicterQs assessment and he pointedly contended that all parties involved needed a formal, measurable plan to make any

progress on the issue. Dictor opined that devising a system of measurement would be impossible.

¶5. Senator Voinovich remained adamant that failing to resolve the crises along the Egyptian-Gazan border would prevent any real efforts at a two-state solution for Israel and the Palestinians. Dictor stated that the only way to prevent continued rocket fire into Israel from Gaza was to create a system of deterrence that would prove to Gazans that their efforts would not benefit them. Dictor stated that if Egypt inevitably failed to find a solution to deterring rockets and smuggling, Israel would. Dictor reminded the group of the Israeli offensive that was launched in 2002 (Note: Dictor was likely alluding to Israel's 2002 Operation Defensive Shield. End Note) as a result of Palestinian militancy and attacks within Israel, foreshadowing a possible Israeli reaction to continued attack.

¶6. Congressman Gingrey relayed to Dictor that, in meetings with the codel prior to its arrival in Israel, the Egyptians denied that they have the capacity to do what is necessary along the border to curtail smuggling. Dictor maintained his belief that the Egyptians have the capacity to act and reiterated that only the will was lacking on the part of the Egyptians.

¶7. Senator Voinovich ended the meeting by asking Dictor to promise that he would read the recent US Army Corps of Engineers' report and provide his analysis of the Army Corps' recommendations. Dictor was noncommittal but stated he would accept the report if sent to him.

¶8. This cable has been cleared by Senator Voinovich.